

VZCZCXRO4047
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1074/01 3041046
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 311046Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6760
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0647
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4184
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7737
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5297
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1170
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1081
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001074

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA: MONKS ON THE MARCH AGAIN

REF: A. RANGOON 835

[1](#)B. RANGOON 868

RANGOON 00001074 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Following a pro-regime rally in Pakokku that residents were forced to participate in, 200 monks marched through the city chanting and carrying the flag of the Buddhist clergy in a peaceful protest. A monk who participated told DVB the monks plan to continue the protests. He urged people and other monks not to be afraid of the regime and to join the demonstrations. Six prominent political activists were released from prison late on October [1](#)30. Among them was NLD spokesman U Myint Thein. The regime detained famous comedian and political activist Zarganar for questioning on October 29, but later released him. He told us the authorities are demanding he name monks who participated in the September protests, which he refuses to do. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Residents of Pakokku confirmed to us that approximately 200 monks marched peacefully through the city for thirty minutes this morning. The protest followed a large, pro-regime demonstration that local residents were forced to join. The pro-government rally began at 8:00 a.m. At approximately 8:30 a.m., around 200 monks marched peacefully through the city, chanting and carrying the flag of the Buddhist clergy as they had during the September protests.

[1](#)3. (U) After the demonstration, a monk who participated in the march told the Burmese-language radio program DVB that the authorities did not disturb the march. The monk said the local Sangha had informed authorities yesterday evening that if the government had the right to stage a demonstration, so did the monkhood. The monks said they planned more demonstrations in coming days. He urged other monks and the Burmese people not to be afraid of the regime and to participate in their movement.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Late yesterday evening the regime released six

opposition politicians including NLD spokesman U Myint Thein, Magwe NLD Division Chairman Han Zaw, NLD Central Women's Committee member Daw Lei Lei, MPs-Elect Pu Chin Sian Thang and Htaung Kho Htan, and Nationalist politician U Win Naing. U Myint Thein told us today he is at home recuperating from stomach ulcers. He said that while in prison, he received no medical attention other than from a fellow prisoner that had been trained to be a medical assistant, and that once he was seen by an army health worker when his condition became very serious.

15. (C) Comedian and political activist Zarganar informed us yesterday that he had been taken in for questioning on October 29 and released the next morning. Zarganar said the police are demanding he give up the names of monks who participated in last month's demonstrations, which he refuses to do. Although Zarganar expected the authorities to take him in for questioning once again on October 30, he told us today that he is still at home, but under very tight surveillance.

16. (C) Comment: Pakokku's monks are brave indeed. Located near Mandalay, Pakokku is a center of Buddhist learning in Burma. It was in Pakokku where monks took local authorities hostage and burned their cars on September 6, after their colleagues were beaten by the regime's USDA thugs after holding a peaceful protest. The protests spread from there, growing in size throughout the country. Given the outrage still felt over the regime's violent crackdown on the revered Buddhist clergy, Pakokku's monks have the potential to bring the Burmese people to the streets again. DVB's audience has grown in Burma since the September crackdown and news of today's demonstration is already traveling fast. But more demonstrations also have the potential to provoke another violent response from the military as it desperately clings to power. We should hope for the best, but plan for the worst. End comment.

RANGOON 00001074 002.2 OF 002

VILLAROSA